



REGION III - HUD MID-ATLANTIC

Regional Administrator Joe DeFelice

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT



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Pennsylvania Adds Two Choice Neighborhoods Planning Projects

This week's "Flashback Friday" photograph is from when I made our last Choice Neighborhoods and first virtual grant announcement back in April. The award was for a \$30 million Implementation Grant awarded in Philadelphia, Pa. It's hard to fathom this was early on in the pandemic before the days of required masks and six-foot social distancing. But, it was still great to celebrate the efforts by members of the community and their elected leaders to obtain this much needed capital for revitalizing the Sharswood/Blumberg neighborhood in the City of Brotherly Love.

Since 2010, eleven Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants totaling just under \$5.5 million have grown into six \$30 million Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants in Baltimore, Maryland; Newport News and Norfolk in Virginia and in Philadelphia (2 awards) and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. That's a total of more than \$185 million invested in improving communities throughout the Mid-Atlantic.

The agency has awarded 35 Choice Neighborhood Implementation Grants to date—which as you know—are highly competitive. Given HUD only awards four or five of these per year, the fact that six of the 35 are in Region III says we have had considerable success!

So, today we celebrate two new Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grants. A heartfelt congratulations to folks in Easton and in Pittsburgh who received two of the 11 awards announced earlier this week. You'll find the "short summary" of the two community initiatives in the graphics posted below. But, I highly recommend reading the longer versions of each—I think you'll enjoy learning about these two communities as well as what the \$450,000 grants will fund.

The West Ward Community Initiative in Easton

The historic City of Easton, home to the county seat of Northampton County, is located just 55 miles north of Philadelphia. Located in the city's West Ward neighborhood is the 57-unit North Union Street Apartments development, which was constructed in 1963 and is home to 139 residents. The West Ward was once a stable, proud, working-class urban neighborhood, but over the years it has experienced a protracted period of disinvestment, pessimism, and crime. With a median household income much lower than that of the city's, over 22 percent of residents aged 25 years and older have less than a high school diploma. Though the community faces many challenges, the West Ward has an abundance of assets that make it unique. These include a rich community history, racial and ethnic diversity, and historic and architecturally significant housing stock. The neighborhood sits adjacent to two

bustling and robust neighborhoods, Downtown Easton – with its revitalized commercial corridor, open-air farmers markets and major art and retail attractions – and the College Hill neighborhood, which is home to Lafayette College, a tradition-rich liberal arts institution founded in 1826. In addition, the neighborhood has been designated as a Federal Opportunity Zone and has recently received a \$1.2 million grant to fund the West Ward Community Initiative, a comprehensive community planning effort, funded through the State of Pennsylvania’s Neighborhood Assistance Program.

The award of the \$450,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant will create a lasting impact on the West Ward through authentic collaboration, early action and community empowerment. Visioning and revitalization efforts will center on residents at its core and use strategies such as a community ambassador program to empower residents. The planning team will review data surrounding existing community conditions to craft a needs assessment tool that will survey residents’ perspectives on target housing, education, health, childcare, public safety, employment and other socio-economic issues. Through sustained and consistent planning and engagement, the Greater Easton Development Partnership, the Housing Authority of the City of Easton and its partners will achieve tremendous momentum towards positive change.

Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant - \$450,000
West Ward Neighborhood, Easton, Pa.

Easton, PA

Choice Neighborhoods Lead Grantee: Greater Easton Development Partnership
Choice Neighborhoods Co-Grantee: Housing Authority of the City of Easton
Target Public Housing Project: North Union Street Apartments
Target Neighborhood: West Ward
Choice Neighborhoods Grant Amount: \$450,000

Key Partners: City of Easton | Easton Area School District | County of Northampton | Lafayette College | 1000 Islands, LLC | Two Rivers Health and Wellness Foundation | Easton Area Community Center | The West Ward Community Initiative

The graphic features a map of Easton, PA, with the West Ward neighborhood highlighted in blue. The map shows major roads, the Delaware River, and various landmarks. The text is presented in a clean, white font on a dark blue background.

Northside Choice – Allegheny Dwellings (Fineview/Perry Hilltop) in Pittsburgh

Located just one mile north of downtown, across the Allegheny River, the Northside Choice - Allegheny Dwellings neighborhood on Pittsburgh’s Northside is home to some of the best views in town. The hillside neighborhood is also home to the 175-unit Allegheny Dwellings public housing development, comprised of 1940’s post war, structurally distressed, barracks-style buildings. Originally developed as a residential area with neighborhood commercial corridors and a large park, the neighborhood has experienced disinvestment over the years. Uniquely isolated from neighboring communities by topography and railroad tracks, the neighborhood was severely impacted by suburban sprawl and the crime wave of the 1990s. Historically vibrant business districts of the past were at one time dubbed, “Pittsburgh’s most dangerous corner.” The residential and commercial core remains pocked with blight, disinvestment and a negative neighborhood image. Despite these challenges, the community still contains all the ingredients to become a thriving neighborhood. Defining physical assets include compact and walkable blocks, access to transit, beautiful hilltop views of the city skyline and easy access to jobs. Faith-based institutions and nonprofits serve as social assets in the neighborhood. Once vibrant sections of the neighborhood are reemerging after years of population and economic decline. In 2019, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh and its partners successfully completed Phase I of the Allegheny Dwellings redevelopment, which included replacement of 92-units with mixed-income housing at the newly named Sandstone Quarry development site. Active, long-time, resident-led working groups have focused on attracting city investments, beautification, youth engagement, community events, and housing stabilization to address remaining neighborhood challenges.

Capitalizing on these strengths, the Fineview Citizens Council, the Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, residents, and their partners will use the \$450,000 Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant to create an impactful Transformation Plan. The planning process will center engagement activities, using a variety of formats that are inviting and inclusive and

emphasize the building of skills, trust, and community. Following an extensive needs assessment, the planning team will organize a resident capacity building “leadership series,” covering a range of topics such as citizen planning, team building and decision making, community health and wellness, trauma and the built environment, financial literacy, home maintenance and investment, and affordable housing 101.

Choice Neighborhoods Planning Grant - \$450,000
Allegheny Dwellings Neighborhood, Pittsburgh, Pa.



Pittsburgh, PA

Choice Neighborhoods Lead Grantee: Fineview Citizens Council
Choice Neighborhoods Co-Grantee: Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh
Target Public Housing Project: Northside Choice - Allegheny Dwellings
Target Neighborhood: Allegheny Dwellings (Fineview/Perry Hilltop)
Choice Neighborhoods Grant Amount: \$450,000

Key Partners: Wallace, Roberts & Todd, LLC | TREK Development Group | The Buhl Foundation | City of Pittsburgh | Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh | Allegheny County Department of Human Services | A+ Schools Pittsburgh | City of Pittsburgh Department of City Planning

Region III Interagency Council on Homelessness
Planning and Operations Committee
Virtual Eviction Panel Discussion



The screenshot shows a virtual meeting grid with 10 participants. The top row includes Lyn Kirshenbaum (top row-left) and Alan Matas (second row-left). The bottom row features the HUD logo on the left and two other participants. A participant list at the bottom of the grid includes icons for +146, BA, AW, RD, PE, NE, and MG.

Community Partners Join HUD to Share Resources to Minimize Displacement & Evictions

During this unprecedented time in our nation, HUD and other federal agencies have administered billions of dollars in CARES Act relief aid to help states prepare for, respond to and recover from the pandemic. Moratoriums from all levels of government have been issued to halt evictions, but as those protections are set end on December 31, many people are at risk of losing their housing. **This week, the Region III Interagency Council on Homelessness convened a panel of community partners to discuss aid, efforts and best practices geared toward helping households at risk of eviction or currently experiencing homelessness due to eviction—in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and guidance.** HUD Regional Homeless Coordinator Lyn Kirshenbaum (top row-left) and Alan Matas (second row-left), Director of Special Projects for the City of Wilmington’s Department of Real Estate and Housing and Chair of RIII-ICH Planning and Operations

Committee, hosted the virtual event with me (top row-middle) welcoming the nearly 200 in attendance. Presenters included Heather Mullins Crislip (third row-right), President and CEO, Housing Opportunities Made Equal (HOME) of Virginia; Kayleigh Silver (second row-right), Senior Manager of Housing and Homeless Services, Your Way Home Montgomery County, Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services, Pennsylvania and John Whitelaw (second row-center), Advocacy Director, Community Legal Aid Society, Inc. (CLASI), Delaware. Many thanks to the presenters for their valuable insight and to our moderator Jared Fink, Attorney-Advisor of HUD's Philadelphia Office of Regional Counsel.



Neighbors Helping Neighbors: Innovative CARES Act Purchase in Delaware

Delaware Public Media's Sophia Schmidt clearly captured what we were all thinking in her title, ['A miracle': New Castle County's hotel opens for emergency shelter on eve of predicted snow](#) for her December 15, 2020 online posting. She wrote, "Just weeks after New Castle County settled on the property, the old Sheraton hotel along I-95 in New Castle is open

as an emergency shelter. The County bought the hotel through an auction in October with \$19.5 million of its federal coronavirus relief money. With winter weather on its way, the New Castle County Hope Center opened not a day too soon." While Delaware's northern most county received 4+ inches of freshly fallen snow on Wednesday, about 70 individuals who had been living outside made their way for the first night of the new Hope Center's opening. In an online posting, New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer shared, "In times of crisis, we must protect our most vulnerable. If you know someone in need in Delaware, please call 1-833-FIND-BED." He added, "Everyone in our state owes a debt of gratitude to Carrie Casey and Nicole Waters. These are 40-hour-a-week New Castle County (DE) government employees who have worked 100 plus hours for six weeks to get the doors open faster than many thought possible." Ms. Casey and Ms. Waters serve in the County's Office of Community Development & Housing. He also gave a shout out to Friendship House, Code Purple, Hersha Hospitality Management and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, the County's partners in the initiative. Photograph of the Hope Center courtesy of Sophia Schmidt, Delaware Public Media.

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Cooperative Research in Housing Technologies. With the publication of this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), HUD is making available up to \$1,000,000 in funding for cooperative agreements for pre-competitive research in homebuilding technologies that provide the homebuilding industry with new, innovative construction products or practices that lead to more affordable, energy efficient, resilient (in this sense, durable, disaster resistant, adaptable for future requirements, and maintainable), and healthier housing. HUD is specifically interested in receiving applications that focus on aspects of residential construction related to factory-built housing and components and/or resilience. Only Historically Black Colleges and Universities may apply. The agency anticipates awarding four (4) grants of up to \$250,000. For more information and how to apply, visit [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov). Applications are due January 5, 2021.

Stay safe, stay sane and be well.

Handwritten signature of the author.

Joe DeFelice, Region III Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Region III Recap, December 18, 2020

Region III Recap & HUDLines, HUD's Region III e-News Brief

We welcome your feedback and invite you to share your news with Lisa A. Wolfe at lisa.a.wolfe@hud.gov. If you know anyone who would like to receive our new Region III Recap or our quarterly HUDLines, please feel free to share. We safeguard and do not rent, sell or permit the use of our lists. To subscribe, visit [HUDLines](#). You may also [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.

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